

154 TPIE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY

to contriut.' it. If th^r=y were allowed their own way, every
 • 'jriedy iv(,j:«i 2:avc ta trucrfe ending,, and every tragedy would
 • Mlr.mft.t": :r. a f.^r."... They are charmingly artificial, but they
 have no tfL-n-x- ••; iirt. You are more fortunate than I am. I
 :.,«!• ure v<:r-, Durii*r;. that not one of the women I have known
 if vjld Lr*vt; ':(ne for me vrhat Sibyl Vane did for you. Ordinary
 won:un alw«./s coracle themselves. Some of them do it by
 uinx in :<>r "sentimental colours. Never trust a woman who
 "vaafs r::a:vE. whatever her age may be, or a woman over thirty-
 rive *vho is fond of pink ribbons. It always means that they
 have a history. Others find a great consolation in suddenly
 discovering the good qualities of their husbands. They flaunt
 their conjugal felicity in one's face, as if it were the most
 fascinating of sins. Religion consoles some. Its mysteries
 have all the charm of a flirtation, a woman once told me; and I
 can quite understand it. Besides, nothing makes one so vain
 as being told that one is a sinner. Conscience makes egotists
 of us all. Yes: there is really no end to the consolations that
 women find in modern life. Indeed, I have not mentioned the
 most important one."
 "What is that, Karry?" said the lad, listlessly.
 ** Oh, the obvious consolation. Taking some one else's admirer
 when one lose's one's own. In good society that always white-
 washes a woman. But really, Dorian, how different Sibyl
 Vane must have been from all the women one meets! There
 is something to me quite beautiful about her death. I am glad
 I am living in a century when such wonders happen. They
 make one believe in the reality of the things we all play with,
 such as romance, passion, and love."
 "I was terribly cruel to her. You forget that."
 "I am afraid that women appreciate cruelty, downright
 cruelty, more than anything else. They have wonderfully
 primitive instincts. We have emancipated them, but they
 remain slaves looking for their masters, all the same. They
 love being dominated. I am sure you were splendid. I have
 never seen you really and absolutely angry, but I can fancy
 how delightful you looked. And, after all, you said something
 to me the day before yesterday that seemed to me at the time
 to be merely fanciful, but that I see now was absolutely true,
 and it holds the key to everything."
 "What was that, Harry?"
 "You said to me that Sibyl Vane represented to you all
 the heroines of romance—that she was Desdemona one night,